

When the Lights Go Out by CassandraCaffrey

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Summary:

Eddie finds out Richie has no opinion on Carly Rae Jepsen and immediately drags him to a concert. Richie's just trying not to let his nearly thirty-year crush on Eddie overtake everything.

alternatively titled: oh god we gotta get you some carly rae jepsen bro

When the Lights Go Out

Author's Note:

I saw Carly live recently. It was incredible. I cried during Run Away With Me. I was listening to it on repeat again tonight. Wrote this. Bon appetit.

“You’ve NEVER listened to Carly?!”

Eddie was getting worked up about this, all flushed and frowning and - yeah, there was no other word for it - *cute*. He was always at his cutest when wildly passionate, and if Richie had known all he had to do to bring about this was casually mention his own extreme lack of knowledge about Carly Rae Jepsen, he absolutely would have brought it up sooner.

Richie held up his hands in surrender, grin plastered across his face because it was his default reaction to when Eddie got in this state. “Uh? I heard that one about calling me maybe about a hundred times on the radio back in 2012?”

“Oh my god,” Eddie said. “Oh my *god* I live with an asshole who doesn’t appreciate real music.”

“What’s wrong with the classics?” Richie happened to think rather highly of his music taste. He’d done a bit of DJing after high school alongside writing his first comedy routines and he’d been fairly good at getting the crowds going, after all.

“Call Me Maybe is THE classic,” Eddie shot back, stabbing into his curry a tad aggressively.

Not for the first time, Richie thought how damn lucky he was that he got to live with such a lunatic. Sure, he’d be murdered in his sleep one day, probably for not refilling the toilet paper or something stupid, but it was worth it if he got to sit back at the end of a long day and enjoy Eddie ranting about Carly Rae through a mouthful of tikka masala. Sonia Kaspbrak would have a fit watching her son care so little for etiquette. Richie Tozier only fell more in love.

So he let Eddie play him Call Me Maybe - pretty much the same bubblegum pop that Richie had vaguely remembered, despite Eddie's insistence that it was a masterpiece rivaling anything the Beatles put out - and he let Eddie talk him into going to the concert Carly was holding next week, even though they were forty-year old bachelors and not teenage girls.

"You do know we're forty-year old bachelors, right, and not teenage girls?"

"That's stereotyping, Rich," Eddie said, not looking up from his laptop as he entered his card details. "And I'm thirty-nine."

"Keep telling yourself that," Richie teased, and started clearing the dishes because he did nice caring gestures like that now. Also because their first week together after Eddie moved in he kept whining something horrible about that one mug of coffee on the kitchen counter which had begun to grow a rather interesting mould.

As he leaned around Eddie to grab his empty bowl, he couldn't resist planting a loud kiss on Eddie's forehead. Eddie swatted him off with a roll of his eyes and a "gross, Rich", like he always did, but not before Richie caught a whiff of Eddie's florally shampoo.

He dropped the dishes in the sink and ran the water, trying not to want more than a forehead kiss, hating himself for wanting more than that.

It's cool, we're friends. Stupidly close friends. We've always gotten up in each other's business and I'd treat any of the other Losers the same. And it's not like Eddie doesn't touch you the same, even though he knows your dirty little secret now.

Eddie had left Call Me Maybe on a loop and was singing along each time, little catches of it Richie could barely hear.

"I threw a wish in the well, don't ask me I'll never tell..." Eddie sung, and his voice wasn't bad. He wasn't going to win American Idol anytime soon, but it was nice.

"Do you and Haystack share the same Spotify account?" Richie said

loudly before he could settle into enjoying it too much. Eddie flipped him the bird without turning around.

God, Richie loved him.

Well. Eddie knows... part of the dirty little secret, anyway.

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Eddie had neglected to tell Richie one little thing about Carly Rae Jepsen.

“Uh,” Richie said. He felt underdressed, in his usual casual get-up of patterned shirt (sky blue tonight, with little sharks on them) and scuffed-up shoes. “Eds, is this Carly a - is she a gay icon or something?”

Eddie turned around from the bar, cans of drink in hand. He, at least, had eschewed his usual dress shirt or polo for a plain black tee that clung a little more to his abs than his other shirts did. That already had made Richie and his developing dad bod feel grubby in comparison. “What makes you say that?”

“Uh,” Richie said. Someone shouldered past him to take Eddie’s place. Richie, only freshly out, hadn’t yet had the courage to delve into the gay club scene but he had a feeling the someone who’d just shoved him in sinfully tight shorts and a croptop bearing the legend ‘Baby Slut’ could possibly be described as a 20-something twink. “Do I need to say?”

Eddie shrugged, shoving a can at Richie and cracking his own open. “I mean - yeah, it’s bubblegum pop at its best. Are you really surprised?”

“Uh,” Richie said again, at a loss for anything else. Keep these witty conversation starters up and Richie could start trading tips with Bill. “I thought there’d be more women?”

“There’s a lot of women,” Eddie pointed out, gesturing absently to a couple holding hands as they cooed over the merchandise stall.

“That’s not - okay, whatever.” Richie opened his can and took a swig,

deciding there and then that he needed to be drunk for this and he needed to be drunk immediately.

He wasn't prepared for Eddie to grab his free hand.

Richie very nearly spat out his JD-and-coke. Throat hot and suddenly dry, he managed to swallow it down before exclaiming, "hey, warn a guy next time!"

"I'm dragging you down to the front," Eddie explained, looking only mildly disgusted as he wiped the back of his wrist against a drop on his cheek that had flown out of Richie's mouth before Richie had gotten the rest down. He had that glint in his eye Richie knew only too well; if Eddie wanted to be down at the front, Eddie was going to get down to the front.

"Right," Richie said, weakly, and squeezed Eddie's hand tight. "Lead on then, mon capitan!"

Eddie snorted and for a moment his fingers loosened their grip on Richie's - Richie's heart immediately dropped - before tightening again - Richie's heart soared - having readjusted them to hold hands in a way that felt better. Like they were here *together* together, rather than just two roommates having a jolly good night out.

As promised, Eddie managed to drag them as close to the front as he could while Richie made a mental reminder to tease Eddie about how easy it was for him to slip through the crowd because, y'know, he was definitely shorter than the average height of a male US citizen. Unfortunately, being at the front meant less space for them both to move and Richie was fully crowded up against Eddie's side - or maybe Eddie was crowded up against his. On Richie's other side, a guy with glitter sparkling in his full beard had his arms wrapped around who Richie assumed was his boyfriend. Glitterbeard caught Richie's eye, looked from him to Eddie and back, and winked. Richie's breathing abruptly halted until he realised the guy hadn't recognised him as Trashmouth Tozier; Glitterbeard was merely commending Richie on his choice of date.

Eddie hadn't let go of Richie's hand yet.

This entire concert had been a bad idea. The worst idea, in fact. The crowd was swaying, singing along to Fleetwood Mac - a song Richie recognised as a staple on his own playlist - and Eddie was singing along too, and Richie was suffocating. He was going to drown here, buried in a sea of Carly Rae fans and his all-consuming unrequited big fat gay love for Eddie Kaspbrak.

He leaned down so his mouth was equal to Eddie's ear, so he could say, "Sorry, I gotta get outta here" and then fumble his way outside and go find a bar to wait the concert out at, but as always, Eddie got there first.

"It's starting!" He hissed in delight, and his grip on Richie's hand only tightened. Sure enough, the dance-floor lights dimmed and the ones on stage turned a fetching shade of brilliant lilac.

Richie could still leave. Fleetwood Mac had died down but Carly's set hadn't begun yet. This was Richie's best chance to leave, before everyone started dancing and getting in everyone else's way.

Richie didn't let go of Eddie's hand. Maybe he would never let go as long as Eddie allowed it.

The first song started up - a big triumphant loud number, and Richie was surprised to recognise the intro from a dozen memes he'd scrolled past on various social media sites. He was also surprised to discover that the song it belonged to was a damn good song with a damn catchy beat.

"I wanna go, get out of here, I'm sick of the party, party!" Carly sung on stage but Richie's attention was elsewhere as Eddie bounced up and down and echoed the lyrics. "I'd run away, I'd run away with you!"

And Richie got it.

There was no way he leaving this concert unless Eddie left with him and somehow Carly Rae Jepsen got that.

"Hold onto me, I never wanna let you go!" Eddie spun around, all wide giddy grin, and they were thirteen and dancing in Richie's

bedroom to the latest record Richie had snagged on sale, they were fifteen and jumping up and down to 'I Think We're Alone Now' at the school dance, they were forty and Eddie was bathed in lilac light and Richie was so in love he couldn't breathe.

"Oh my BABY!" Eddie shouted directly into Richie's face, both ruining the moment and enhancing it with his very Eddie-ness, and his hands were suddenly on Richie's shoulders - when had he let go of Eddie's hand? - and Richie's hands automatically went to Eddie's waist before he had time to panic about the repercussions of that action.

The chorus kicked in again and Richie had picked up enough of it by now to sing along.

"When the lights go out!" They chorused, and Eddie's grin widened. "Run away with me!" Eddie was so hot beneath his hands and Richie's palms were sweaty, would Eddie notice if he tried to wipe them on Eddie's shirt? "Run away with me!" They were close enough that Richie could count Eddie's eyelashes, all of them, which Richie might have to do if he wanted to avoid looking at Eddie's mouth. "Run away with-!"

Carly and the crowd around them kept going but Richie was unable to get the last word of the lyric out because Eddie's mouth - Eddie's mouth, which he'd tried so hard not to think about - was abruptly on his own.

Richie froze because he didn't know what else to do. It must have been the wrong thing, because Eddie quickly pulled away, stared at him with wide eyes, said something short Richie didn't catch over the music, and then tried to push away through the crowd.

It hadn't been a long kiss. It hadn't been a particularly good kiss, either. Eddie's teeth had hit Richie's rather hard, reminding him of long hours spent at his dad's dental surgery with his dad tapping away at his mouth - and wasn't that a stupid and somewhat disturbing thing to think about when the guy you've been half in love with your entire life suddenly kisses you without warning and runs away.

“Run away with me!” the crowd chorused for a final time, and finally Richie stopped staring blankly into space and snapped into action.

He caught Eddie in the near-empty foyer, literally grabbing at his elbow because the “hey, Eddie! Eddie!” didn’t slow Eddie down at all.

“What?!” Eddie snapped, twisting around in Richie’s grip like a feral raccoon Richie’s just picked off the street.

“You kissed me,” Richie said, dumbly. It was the only thing he could think to say. “What the hell.”

“No, I didn’t!” Eddie said, but he was already faltering. Eddie had never been a particularly good liar. “I - okay, yeah, maybe I did, but I was just - it was just-”

“You *kissed* me,” Richie said again. He didn’t know what he wanted, he just knew he didn’t want Eddie to run off without him. Carly was on a different song now - he could hear it thudding out of the theatre - but all he could think is *run away with me, run away with me...*

Eddie dropped his head to Richie’s chest and gave an exasperated groan, one that rumbled deep from his own body and straight into Richie’s. “Rich, I want you to answer honest - did you ever really think I was straight?”

Richie’s brain short-circuits. He remembers the little rainbow on that one pair of Eddie’s shorts and he remembers poking fun of Eddie’s taste in bubblegum pop only a week before. “Uh.”

“Cause like - I thought I did. I really thought I did! I married a *woman*, for Christsake-” Eddie was rambling now and Richie was barely keeping up. “But then Derry happened and it was like - like a switch was flicked, you know? Even before you told us about all the shit you’d been keeping from us, you did that damn blowjob shot and immediately asked about Myra and I - it hit me that I was *ashamed* to talk about Myra, like I wasn’t being true to myself? And I thought it was just because I’d finally joined the dots between her and my mom but then I kept remembering all these things I’d forgotten and-”

Richie grasped Eddie’s chin, tilted it up, and kissed him to shut him

up.

Eddie tensed beneath him and Richie almost pulled away - had an apology ready on the tip of his tongue - but then Eddie's hands curled into Richie's shark shirt and sharply tugged him closer. Richie willingly let him - oh, okay, he could get into being manhandled, mentally file that one away for later examination - and this time the kiss was good. Better than good.

This time it was Richie that pulled away, but only to take in a quick gulp of air before kissing Eddie again. Maybe he would never stop kissing Eddie as long as Eddie was standing in front of him, eager and willing, while Carly Rae Jepsen sang away in the background.

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"I can't *believe* you made a bet with Stan that you wouldn't kiss me at our first Carly concert, and then immediately forgot about it the second she started singing. I just drive you that wild, huh?"

"Nothing to do with you, Rich! Carly's just got that much power."

"Mmmm. Yeah, I get it. Now how about you finish sending that money to Stan and get over here so I can show you *my* power instead, and by 'power' I'm talking-"

"Don't call your dick your power."

"- I'm talking about my dick."

"How the fuck did I ever fall for you again?"

"Want a repeat performance? Hey, Alexa, play 'Run Away With Me' by Carly Rae-"

Eddie dove onto Richie's lap and kissed him, but the song played anyway.

Neither Eddie nor Richie considered stopping it.